

***Plantago macrocarpa* L. (Cham. & Schlecht.)**
Alaska plantain
Plantaginaceae (Plantain family)

Status: State Sensitive

Rank: G4S2

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1969): *Plantago macrocarpa* is a stout perennial that has a heavy root. It is glabrous, except for the main axis (rachis) of the inflorescence and the upper part of the flower stalk, which have woolly to shaggy hairs when young. The leaves are elongate and usually 4 to 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (10-45 cm) long including the petiole, and $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (1-3.5 cm) wide. The 1 or more leafless flower stalks (scapes) are 4 to 24 in. (1-6 dm) tall. The inflorescence is short and dense at flowering, and is $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1- $\frac{2}{3}$ in. (1.5-4 cm) long, but sometimes elongates to 1- $\frac{1}{8}$ to 4 in. (3-10 cm) when in fruit. The thin bracts are broadly elliptic or ovate, and are $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (3-4 mm) long. The corolla tubes are spreading and $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (1.5-2 mm) long. There are 4 long anthers that slightly protrude beyond the corolla. The indehiscent (not opening in fruit) capsule is $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (6-7 mm) long.

Identification Tips: This species may be mistaken for *P. major* and can be distinguished by the following: *P. macrocarpa* has elongate leaves that are 4 to 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (10-45 cm) long including the petiole, and $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (1-3.5 cm) wide, whereas the leaves of *P. major* are comparatively stouter and are 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 7- $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (4-18 cm) long, and 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (2.5-3 cm) wide. The indehiscent capsule of *P. macrocarpa* is unique in the genus.

Phenology: This species fruits mostly from May to June. The fruit is helpful for identification.

Range: This species is distributed from Alaska south to Oregon. In Washington it occurs in Clallam, Jefferson, and Grays Harbor counties.

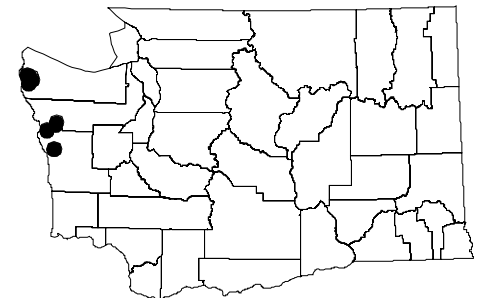
Habitat: This species has been found in Washington from 100 to 1000 ft. (30-300 m) elevation. It is usually scattered in small clumps in wet, peaty soil among sphagnum moss. Most sites are open with very few trees or shrubs. It is found along lakeshores and wetlands near the coast. Associated species include camas (*Camassia quamash*), sedge (*Carex* spp.), sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum* spp.), starflower (*Trientalis* spp.), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), alpine bog laurel (*Kalmia*

Plantago macrocarpa
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Known distribution of
Plantago macrocarpa
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

Plantago macrocarpa

Alaska plantain



Linda Kunze



Linda Kunze

Plantago macrocarpa

Alaska plantain

occidentalis), sweet gale (*Myrica gale*), Western turkeybeard (*Xerophyllum tenax*), gentian (*Gentiana* spp.), Labrador tea (*Ledum* sp.), and ferns.

Ecology: *Plantago macrocarpa* is found in seasonally flooded sites.

State Status Comments: This species is known from only a small number of occurrences, with small numbers of individuals in each population. This in addition to the threats to its wetland habitats contributes to its state status.

Inventory Needs: Continued inventory within wetlands in coastal Washington is needed for this species.

Threats and Management Concerns: Timber harvest and hydrologic alteration may affect this species.

References:

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1959. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 4: Ericaceae Through Campanulaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 510 pp. (p. 440)